



A

B

The **two large bronze statues** were **found in the sea off Riace** (in Italy in the province of Reggio Calabria) in 1972. There is no certainty about their provenance and destination; but whether they came from a town in Greece, Magna Grecia or Sicily, they were probably being taken to Rome for either a public building or a private collection.

The bronzes date to the 5th century BC and probably *Statue A* was cast in the decade preceding 450 BC while *Statue B* was executed in the following decade.

Two Sculptures Between Rigor and Classicism

At a first glance the statues seem very similar. They probably portray two warriors or else athletes who ran with weapons (*oplitodromoi*). In fact, a shield handle was also found on the same archaeological site. The left arm of each figure is positioned to hold a shield; probably in the right hand *Statue A* held a lance and *Statue B* a sword.

Careful thought has been given to the nude figures' pose as they stand in a chiastic position, with their hips slightly off-center to accompany the rotation of the upper body. These details bear witness to sculpture that has assimilated – maybe even anticipated – the art of Polyclitus. The bodies' detailed position, highlighted by the plastic rendering of their muscles, would have interacted dynamically with the regular linear shapes of the weapons they carried. The use of colour, as expressed in different materials, shows an attention to naturalism: the lips and breast nipples are in red copper, *Statue A's* eyelashes and teeth are in silver while his eyes are in glass paste and ivory.

There is no doubt that these sculptures were produced by an important workshop. Many hypotheses have been formulated. Some scholars think that they were created in a centre in Magna Grecia but others, such as the archaeologist Werner Fuchs, have hypothesised an Attic workshop. In this case, the

statues might have been made by artists connected to *Phidias*; they may even have been two of the sculptures of heroes, kings and gods that the Athenians donated to the temple at Delphi in thanksgiving for the victory at Marathon.

Still another, more widely accredited theory, is that the statues come from the native city of Polyclitus, from the circle of Argos; particularly *Statue A* has been ascribed to **Ageladas the Younger** (teacher of Myron, Polyclitus, and Phidias) and *Statue B* to **Alcamenes of Lemnos**. In this case both figures would have been executed for the agora of Argos.

Fig. 1, 2
Ageladas the Younger (attrib.),
Statue A, 460-450 BC.
 Bronze, h. 198 cm.
 Reggio Calabria, Museo Nazionale.
Right: detail of the face.

Fig. 3
Alcamenes of Lemnos (attrib.),
Statue B, 450-440 BC.
 Bronze, h. 197 cm.
 Reggio Calabria, Museo Nazionale.





Read and Recognise

1 Complete the text by inserting or choosing the most suitable words or expressions.

1. There is no certainty about the sculptures' _____ although hypotheses include Greece, *Middle East* *Magna Grecia* and Sicily.
2. The figures probably portray _____ or _____ who ran with _____.
3. The sculptor carefully considered the statues' pose, which is *frontal* *in three-quarter* profile and described as a _____ position.
4. Bronze is not the only material used here; the heads include pieces of _____ and _____ while the breast nipples are made of _____.
5. The sculptor give the figure an impression of *naturalness and dynamism* *steadiness and sacreness*.
6. Scholars have debated where the statues were made: in a centre in _____, or an _____ workshop, or among the artists' circle of _____. In the latter case the figures would have been displayed in the city _____.

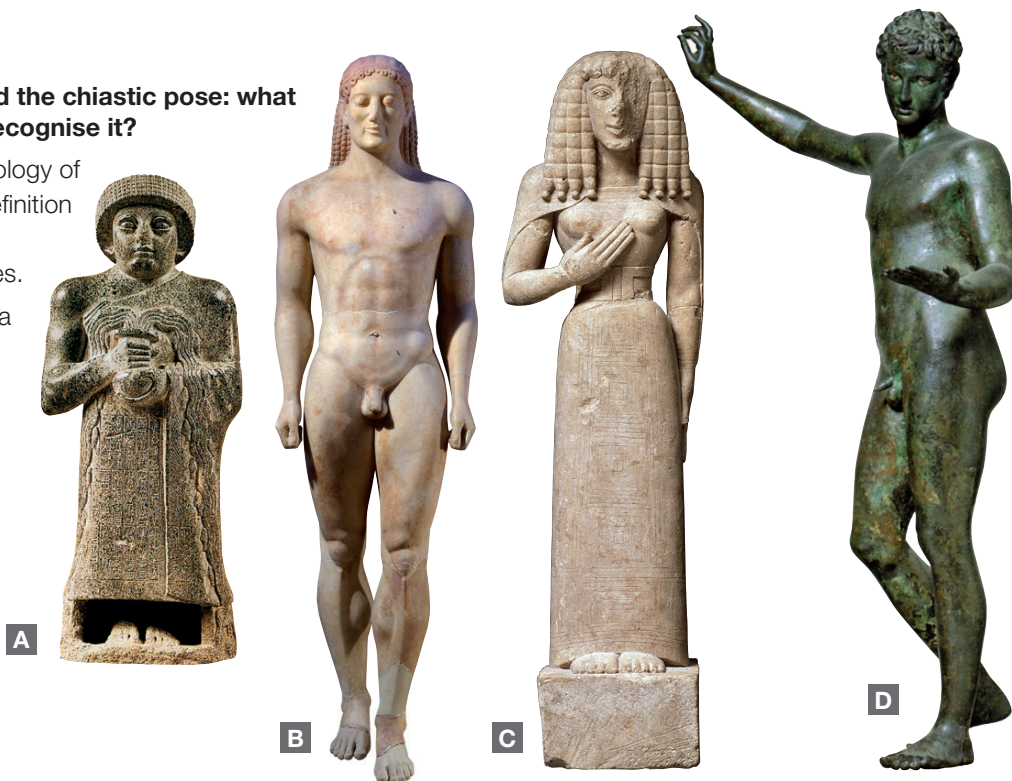
2 Who's who in Greek art? Read the text for clues.

1. Naming two sculptors from the Argos circle as the creators of the w, one hypothesis says that statue B is by _____ and dates to _____ while statue A is by _____ and dates to _____.
2. The latter artist was the teacher of great sculptors like _____, _____ and _____. This last artist was the main architectural planner of the _____ in Athens.
3. However many scholars see a strong influence by sculpture that has assimilated the art of _____.

Vocabulary

3 Greek sculpture introduced the chiastic pose: what does it mean? Can you recognise it?

- A. Search on the web the etymology of the word *chiastic* and the definition of the *chiastic* pose in art. Syntetyses them in three lines.
- B. Recognise the sculptur with a chiastic pose.



Follow-up

4 Werner Fuchs and other scholars made hypotheses about the Riace Bronzes' provenance and their destination.

- A. Underline all the words and expressions in the text that communicate the idea of a hypothesis being made.
- B. Can Fuch's hypothesis be considered scientific? Sharpen your ideas at <http://www.livescience.com/21490-what-is-a-scientific-hypothesis-definition-of-hypothesis.html>
- C. Now imagine that you live in 450 BC and you want to sell these statues to a private collector in Rome – turn the hypothetical points that you underlined into strongly affirmative statements.